



[Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl. 1982: 102(3)]

Bulletin of the BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

Vol. 102 No. 3

Published: 20 September 1982

The seven hundred and fortieth Meeting of the Club was held at the Senior Common Room, South Side, Imperial College, London, S.W.7 on Tuesday 22 June 1982 at 7 p.m. The attendance was 15 Members and 7 guests.

Members present were: D. R. CALDER (*Chairman*), K. F. BETTON, Dr G. BEVEN, Mrs D. M. BRADLEY, P. A. BROWN, J. H. R. BOSWALL, R. A. N. CROUCHER, J. H. ELGOOD, B. GRAY, D. GRIFFIN, Dr A. G. KNOX, Dr J. F. MONK, R. E. F. PEAL, Dr T. J. SELLER and R. J. WATLING.

Guests present were: Mrs G. BEVEN, Mrs F. A. CLIFTON, R. I. CHANDLER, J. CROCKER, P. ESPIN, Mrs R. E. F. PEAL and J. E. TRICKS.

Dr T. J. Sellar, whose talk had been postponed when the January meeting had unavoidably to be cancelled, spoke most interestingly on "Are Bullfinches and fruit crops really incompatible?", using research data assembled at West Malling Research Centre to throw possible doubt on the degree of harm caused by Bullfinches in orchards.

Land-birds of a guano island off the coast of Peru

by *David Cameron Duffy*

Received 14 October 1981

Although the resident sea-birds of the guano islands of Peru have received considerable attention (e.g. Murphy 1925, 1936, Vogt 1942) there exists little information on the occurrence of landbirds. Galarza (1968) listed 5 species seen during visits to Isla Chinha Norte ($13^{\circ}37'S$, $76^{\circ}24'W$): Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*, Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*, Seaside Cinclodes *Cinclodes nigrofumosus*, House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*, and Hooded Siskin *Carduelis (=Spinus) magellanicus*. Andean Condor *Vultur gryphus*, Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus*, Turkey Vulture, Peregrine Falcon, and Seaside Cinclodes have been reported by other authors (Murphy 1925, Hellmayr & Conover 1949: 229, Tovar 1968).

I recorded 12 species of land-birds on Isla Mazorca ($11^{\circ}22'S$, $77^{\circ}45'W$), Departamento de Lima, Peru, between 21 Sep 1977 and 30 Mar 1978, except for the periods 4-6 Oct, 1-4 Nov, 13-19 Nov, 1-5 Dec, 29 Dec-2 Jan, 1-6 Feb and 3-7 Mar.

Mazorca, approximately 1×0.5 km, with an area of 11 ha, is 15 km from the Peruvian coast. This distance is broken by several small islands of the Huara group. Mazorca has an elevation of 84 m, with steep slopes or sheer cliffs. Except for moss on the highest point, there is no natural vegetation on Mazorca, nor on the other islands of the Huara group. The islands' guards have planted about 20 flowering plants and vegetables, but these are probably not a significant source of food for birds. There is almost no rainfall (Murphy 1925), but heavy morning dews are common. The only permanent water is run-off from a cistern and a large basin put out for the cats, dogs and pigeons kept by the guards.

The dominant ecological feature of the island is a mixed colony of 300,000 Peruvian Boobies *Sula variegata* and 300,000 Guanay Cormorants *Phalacrocorax*

bougainvillii. Smaller numbers of 5 other seabirds also nest. Phenomenal populations of avian ectoparasites, a possible food source, are also present. All the following sight records are of single individuals unless otherwise noted.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*. 25–27 Oct, 6–7 Nov, 7–12 Nov.

Bare-faced Ground Dove *Metriopelia ceceliae*. 17–18 Oct.

Band-winged Nightjar *Caprimulgus longirostris*. 27 Oct, 3 Jan.

Greyish Miner *Geositta maritima*. 21 Sep, 16 Oct, 20 Oct, 12 Nov.

Vermilion Flycatcher *Pyrocephalus rubinus*. 27 Dec, 24 Feb (found freshly dead).

Eastern Kingbird *Tyrannus tyrannus*. 17 Oct, 25 Oct.

Southern Martin *Progne modestus*. 22–25 Sep, 11 Oct, 2 on 25 Oct.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*. 22–25 Sep, 16–17 Oct, 3 during 22–23 Oct, 4 on 24 Oct, 2 on 26 Oct (one found dead).

Cave Swallow *Petrochelidon fulva*. 17 Oct.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*. Numbers fluctuated from 2 to 10 until December, after which only 2 were present. There was no evidence of breeding but I was unable to examine several possible locations. Birds were seen to sally after insects and to probe in holes in concrete and wood like the Paridae. M. Plenge (pers. comm.) has observed the latter behaviour by House Sparrows in Lima.

Bobolink *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*. 40 on 22 Oct, 24 Oct (found dead after striking lighthouse).

Rufous-collared Sparrow *Zonotrichia capensis*. 16 Oct, 11 Nov.

The species list is not surprising except that Turkey Vulture and Seaside Cinclodes, apparently the most frequent land-birds on other guano islands, were absent. *Mazorca* is relatively far from the coast, which may explain the absence of the vulture, while the paucity of sheltered inter-tidal habitat could explain the absence of the cinclodes.

Four of the 12 species recorded are northern migrants and the rest are common or fairly common residents of the adjacent coast. Despite a mainland avifauna adapted to the arid terrain of coastal Peru, only the exotic House Sparrow seems able to tolerate the extreme aridity and lack of vegetation of this guano island.

Acknowledgements: I would like to thank Peruvian authorities for allowing me to work on *Mazorca*. M. Plenge, B. Torres, and P. Yengle provided help and encouragement. This report is part of a larger project sponsored by a Fellowship from the Organization of American States, Princeton University, and a grant for dissertation-research by the National Science Foundation (DEB77-16077).

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